

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

James Drummond,	:	
	:	Civil Action No.: _____
Plaintiff,	:	
v.	:	
Pinnacle Financial Group; and DOES 1-10, inclusive,	:	COMPLAINT
	:	
Defendants.	:	

For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, James Drummond, by undersigned counsel, states as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises out of Defendants' repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA"), and the invasions of Plaintiff's personal privacy by the Defendants and their agents in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.
2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1337.
3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, James Drummond ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Fort Washington, Maryland, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

5. Defendant, Pinnacle Financial Group (“Pinnacle”), is a Minnesota business entity with an address of 7825 Washington Avenue South, Suite 310, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55439, operating as a collection agency, and is a “debt collector” as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

6. Does 1-10 (the “Collectors”) are individual collectors employed by Pinnacle and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.

7. Pinnacle at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

8. A financial obligation (the “Debt”) was incurred to a creditor (the “Creditor”).

9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a “debt” under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to Pinnacle for collection, or Pinnacle was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.

11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in “communications” as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. Pinnacle Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

12. Pinnacle called the Plaintiff seven (7) times a day in an attempt to collect with the intent to harass.

13. Pinnacle was rude and abusive when speaking to the Plaintiff.

14. The Plaintiff asked Pinnacle to explain the amount of the Debt and how the Debt was incurred. Pinnacle told the Plaintiff they would tell him this information only if he promised to pay the Debt.

15. Pinnacle told the Plaintiff to "say bye to your credit rating," and to "dream high, because you'll never have credit again."

16. Pinnacle failed to notify the Plaintiff of his rights under state and federal law by written correspondence within five (5) days after initial contact, including the right to dispute the Debt.

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

17. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants' unlawful conduct.

18. As a direct consequence of the Defendants' acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, fear, frustration and embarrassment.

19. The Defendants' conduct was so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency, and to be regarded as atrocious, and utterly intolerable in a civilized community.

COUNT I **VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.**

20. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

21. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(2) in that Defendants used profane and abusive language when speaking with the consumer.

22. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(5) in that Defendants caused a phone to ring repeatedly and engaged the Plaintiff in telephone conversations, with the intent to annoy and harass.

23. The Defendants' conduct violated in that Defendants threatened to communicate false credit information, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(8).

24. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) in that Defendants employed false and deceptive means to collect a debt.

25. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the amount of the Debt.

26. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(2) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the name of the original creditor to whom the Debt was owed.

27. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(3) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice stating the Plaintiff's right to dispute the Debt within thirty days.

28. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice informing the Plaintiff of a right to have verification and judgment mailed to the Plaintiff.

29. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(5) in that Defendants failed to send the Plaintiff a validation notice containing the name and address of the original creditor.

30. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendant constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.

31. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendant's violations.

COUNT II
VIOLATIONS OF THE MARYLAND CONSUMER DEBT COLLECTION ACT
MD. CODE COMM. LAW § 14-201, et seq.

32. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

33. The Defendants are each individually a "collector" as defined under MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-201(b).

34. The debt is a "consumer transaction" as defined under MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-201(c).

35. The Defendants disclosed or threatened to disclose information affecting the Plaintiff's reputation for creditworthiness, in violation of MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-202(3).

36. The Defendants repeatedly contacted the Plaintiff with the intent to harass or abuse, in violation of MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-202(6).

37. The Defendants used obscene and grossly abusive language when communicating with the Plaintiff, in violation of MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-202(7).

38. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages proximately caused by the Defendants' violations.

COUNT III
INVASION OF PRIVACY BY INTRUSION UPON SECLUSION

39. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

40. The *Restatement of Torts, Second*, § 652(b) defines intrusion upon seclusion as, "One who intentionally intrudes...upon the solitude or seclusion of another, or his private affairs

or concerns, is subject to liability to the other for invasion of privacy, if the intrusion would be highly offensive to a reasonable person.”

41. Maryland further recognizes the Plaintiff’s right to be free from invasions of privacy, thus Defendants violated Maryland state law.

42. The Defendants intentionally intruded upon Plaintiff’s right to privacy by continually harassing the Plaintiff with repeated rude phone calls, and threats to the Plaintiff’s credit rating.

43. The telephone calls made by the Defendants to the Plaintiff were so persistent and repeated with such frequency as to be considered “hounding the plaintiff” and “a substantial burden to her existence,” thus satisfying the *Restatement of Torts, Second*, § 652(b) requirement for an invasion of privacy.

44. The conduct of the Defendants in engaging in the illegal collection activities resulted in multiple invasions of privacy in such a way as would be considered highly offensive to a reasonable person.

45. As a result of the intrusions and invasions, the Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages in an amount to be determined at trial from the Defendants.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against the Defendants:

1. Actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) against the Defendants;
2. Statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A) against the Defendants;
3. Costs of litigation and reasonable attorney’s fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) against the Defendants;

4. Actual damages pursuant to MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-203;
5. Actual damages pursuant to MD. Ann. Code. Bus. Reg. § 7-401(b);
6. Statutory damages pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B) & (C);
7. Actual damages from the Defendants for the all damages suffered as a result of the intentional, reckless, and/or negligent FDCPA violations and intentional, reckless, and/or negligent invasions of privacy in an amount to be determined at trial for the Plaintiff; and
8. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: August 31, 2010

Respectfully submitted,

By /s/ Forrest E. Mays

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